Department of Transportation
Project No. 102-323
Rehabilitation of Bridge No. 00051
Rampart Road over Interstate Route 95
City of Norwalk

March 24, 2009 at 7:00 p.m.
Norwalk City Hall Room A322

Minutes

Present:

Connecticut Department of Transportation (ConnDOT or Department)
Julie F. Georges, Transportation Principal Engineer
Mary E. Baker, Transportation Engineer
Paul Breen, District 3 Construction Office

Close, Jensen and Miller, P.C. (CJM)
E. Allen Randall, Liaison Director
Mark F. Levesque, Project Engineer

Presentation:

The Public Information Meeting was presented by ConnDOT's Mary Baker and CJM's Mark Levesque who presented the following information:

- Mary Baker began the meeting by describing ConnDOT's responsibility for initiating and implementing projects, CJM's role as Consultant Liaison Engineers, and the project goals.
- Ms. Baker summarized the existing bridge, which is a two-span, simple span structure, built in 1958, consisting of a multiple steel stringer superstructure with a reinforced concrete deck supported by reinforced concrete abutments and a reinforced concrete center pier. It is situated between U.S. Route 1 and Jomar Road and carries one lane of traffic in each direction. The bridge is located on a vertical tangent downgrade from west to east and a horizontal tangent alignment with horizontal curves on both approach roadways. It has an overall length and width of 137 feet and 42.5 feet, respectively, and a curb-to-curb width of 30 feet. There are 5'-1" wide sidewalks on each side of the bridge. The Average Daily Traffic (ADT) on Rampart Road is 1,750 vehicles (2008 estimated) of which approximately 2% are trucks. The ADT on I-95 is 142,400 vehicles (2007).

- Ms. Baker next described the reasons for the project. She noted that the existing bridge is structurally deficient ("poor" condition of steel superstructure) due to numerous areas of impact damage resulting from vehicular collisions. She noted that the existing bridge's minimum vertical underclearance over I-95 of 14'-7" is much less than the desired 16'-3" minimum vertical underclearance, which is the current design standard for new bridge projects over an interstate.
- Mark Levesque described the proposed construction, which involves the replacement of the superstructure with a new two-span continuous shallower superstructure consisting of multiple high performance steel stringers and a reinforced concrete deck on a raised roadway profile (1.75 feet higher than existing at its highest point) to increase the vertical clearance over Interstate Route 95 to 16'-3". Minor substructure modifications will be necessary to accommodate the raised superstructure. Most other proposed bridge dimensions such as width and length will match those of the existing bridge. The approach roadways will be modified for approximately 110 feet at each side of the bridge to tie in the existing roadways to the raised roadway at the bridge. The guide railing within the project limits will be updated to the current standards and a 6-foot high protective fence will be installed on the proposed bridge to prevent objects from falling onto I-95.
- Mr. Levesque continued with a synopsis of project impacts with respect to the following:
    - Public Utilities – temporary relocation of overhead telephone, electric and cable television poles and wires that cross diagonally over the bridge, temporary relocation of the dry standpipe attached to the bridge fascia at the center pier, and temporary relocation of the Incident Management System attached to the bridge. All utilities have been contacted and coordination will continue as the project develops.
    - Rights-of-Way - Since the existing right-of-way for I-95 is approximately 300 feet, no impacts to private property are anticipated as a result of the project
- Mr. Levesque discussed the method by which the construction would be accomplished. A complete closure of the bridge and detouring of traffic through the proposed city and State owned streets was shown. The detour would direct traffic around the bridge utilizing Rampart Road, U.S. Route 1, Scribner Avenue and Flax Hill Road. It was noted that the detour would offer benefits versus other maintenance and protection of traffic schemes including: ease of construction, the fastest construction time, the best quality of construction, the least expensive construction cost.
- Ms. Baker and Mr. Levesque concluded the presentation with statements of the anticipated project cost, funding and schedule:
    - Cost estimated at $2,900,000; 80% federal funds and 20% state funds

- Construction duration of approximately 12 months with an anticipated start date in middle of 2010; schedule is preliminary and predicated upon the availability of funding

Public Comments and Questions:

- A resident inquired about other ConnDOT projects over I-95 currently under design such as Fairfield Avenue and Cedar Street and what effect this project would have on those projects.

  Response: The Department indicated that the projects will be coordinated by ConnDOT's Office of Construction so that simultaneous road closures do not occur. Some other State projects in Norwalk are further developed than this project, but the subject project does not have long lead times such as obtaining environmental permits, complex utility relocations, or rights-of-way issues. This project may be completed before the other projects begin construction.

- A resident noted that Jo-Mar Road had recently been resurfaced and was concerned that construction vehicles and debris would damage the new pavement.

  Response: It was explained that prior to construction, a condition survey of the site could be performed. The Contractor would be responsible for ensuring that the pavement on Jo-Mar Road is in the same condition as it was prior to the start of construction.

- A resident who lived in close proximity to the bridge was concerned about several items associated with the proposed construction including: the hours of construction; when the demolition of the existing structure would occur; how long it would take to demolish the existing superstructure; and the noise levels that the construction would impose on the neighborhood.

  Response: ConnDOT noted that removal of the existing steel superstructure and erection of the new steel superstructure would be completed during off-peak hours, particularly between the hours of 9:00 PM and 6:00 AM, since closures of I-95 would be necessary to remove and erect the steel. Deck demolition may also occur during off-peak hours as well, but could occur during daytime hours if a shield were constructed to prevent any debris from falling onto I-95. It was stated that demolition of a typical superstructure such as this should last approximately one month. Construction of the proposed reinforced concrete deck and substructure modifications could take place during daytime hours. Paul Breen indicated that the maximum allowable noise level at the nearest residence to the construction site was 90 decibels.

- A resident questioned whether the large construction vehicles could be directed to use the west side of Rampart Road and U.S. Route 1 to remove construction debris and deliver construction materials and equipment instead of using the east side of Rampart Road and travelling through the residential area. He also questioned where the Contractor would be staging the project.

  Response: ConnDOT responded that the Contractor can be notified to limit the number of large construction vehicles that would travel through the residential area. When demolishing and constructing the east span of the bridge, it may be difficult to avoid travelling through the residential area with these large vehicles. Paul Breen indicated that the Contractor may elect to use I-95 to remove construction debris and deliver materials during the off-peak hours with the partial I-95 nighttime closures since it is the simplest means of egress from the site. The Contractor may elect to use the west side due to the proximity to U.S. Route 1 and the difficulty involved with negotiating turns on local roads with large vehicles. There is no staging area established to date, but the Contractor has approximately 300 feet of right-of-way for I-95 on Rampart Road to work with and can probably stage most of the project from within this area. The Contractor cannot use any private property for staging without permission from the owner.

- Another resident expressed concern with notification of the public of the start date of the project. The resident requested that the Department visit each house in the immediate vicinity of the project and distribute business cards indicating the name and number of a contact person to express any questions and concerns that may arise during construction.

  Response: The Department replied that the typical notification process is through press releases to the media two weeks prior to the start of construction similar to those published for the Public Information Meeting and through announcements made on ConnDOT's website. Variable message boards and other signs may be installed near the bridge a few weeks prior to the start of construction notifying the public of the upcoming project and detour. A contact person should be listed in the legal notice and announcement.

- A resident requested that the PowerPoint presentation for the Public Information Meeting be posted on the Internet for the public to view.

  Response: ConnDOT has not typically posted these presentations on the ConnDOT website, but may investigate this possibility.

Adjournment: The Public Information Meeting ended at approximately 7:45 p.m.